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ABSTRACT

This study examines the responses of the residents of one suburban school district to a mail survey regarding the community's public schools in a period of rising school taxes and declining school enrollment. Specifically addressing the idea that school districts are better viewed as several communities rather than one, the study attempts to determine whether a citizen's residence in a particular elementary school attendance area affects certain responses in the questionnaire. The results of the study confirm the major question guiding the research--neighborhood communities are different in ways that should be of interest to school boards and school officials, particularly in times of declining enrollment. Residents threatened by a possible school closing were shown to have responded significantly differently from nonthreatened residents in three areas: in responding to the survey; in budget voting activity; and in choosing the community because of its quality schools. Overall, the study seems to suggest that a school community mail survey--with proper planning and a realistic timeline--can provide school districts with valuable insights into the dynamics of their citizenry. (Author)

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THE POLITICAL NATURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN AN ENROLLMENT DECLINE

by

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The Political Nature of the Neighborhood School Community in an Enrollment Decline

This study examines the responses of the residents of one suburban school district to a mail survey regarding the community's public schools in a period of rising school taxes and declining school enrollment. Addressing itself to the idea that school districts are better viewed as several communities rather than one (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970; Summerfield, 1971; Wood & Boyd, 1981), the study attempts to determine whether a citizen's residence in a particular elementary school attendance area affects certain responses in the questionnaire. Implicit in the study is the question of how useful survey information is in identifying the political nature of school attendance areas within the district.

The phenomenon of declining student enrollment and rising taxes, a matter of serious concern to school districts throughout the country (Abramowitz & Rosenfeld, 1978, p. 1) is often further compounded by citizen reaction. In an era of prosperity and more generous public attitudes toward school budgets, declining enrollment in schools might be welcomed as an opportunity for improved curriculum development and innovation. For taxpayers struggling with today's inflation, however, declining enrollments in public schools simply mean less state aid, costly maintenance on under-utilized buildings, and an excess of highly salaried staff (Gay, Dembowski, & McLennan, 1981, pp. 656-657).

Much of the earlier, so-called "advice" literature on decline points to lack of preparation in three areas as most often responsible for crises that arise: lack of a master plan for managing the decline; lack of accurate information for decision making regarding the decline; and lack of meaningful procedures to involve the community in the process of arriving at solutions.

One strategy commonly perceived by taxpayers as a logical solution to the declining enrollment problem is that of cutting costly fuel oil bills and administrative staff salaries by closing underutilized buildings. It is on the issue of school closings, however, that many districts run into serious trouble with the community--or, more accurately, with that subcommunity whose neighborhood school is to be closed. A school closing--or even the threat of one--often touches a nerve in the citizenry that dramatically alters the political climate of the school community. Some experts have, therefore, urged school districts to involve their citizens in the process of finding solutions to the problem (Abramowitz & Rosenfeld, 1978; Keough, 1974, 1978; Eisenberger, 1974; O'Neil, 1980).

The declining enrollment phenomenon has thrust the issue of citizen participation into the decision-making process of local suburban school districts throughout the country--many of whom are unused to or uncomfortable with the reality of politics in the educational sector. Some districts seek to involve their citizenry

early, before the community faces a crisis; others, that wait, often face a deeply divided community in which a "no-win" outcome seems inevitable.

For those districts that attempt either to gauge the pulse of their citizens or actually to enlist their participation in dealing with declining enrollment problems, two strategies are often used: the community survey and the citizens' advisory committee or task force. Both may serve as a genuine reaching out to the community for information and involvement. Surveys, for example, may include the following purposes:

- to project an "open system" image of the decision-making process to the residents at large;
- to assess the opinions of residents regarding the public schools;
- to determine the extent of public support for current educational programs and use of facilities; and/or
- to elicit information on residents' concerns regarding the future of the community's public school program and policies.

Information gathered in such surveys raises interesting questions for study, especially if the responses are analyzed by school attendance areas rather than the district as a whole. Students of educational politics and community studies have acknowledged that a school district consists of socio-political units determined by neighborhood school attendance areas, even though most Americans like to think of public school systems as being removed

from politics. Harry Summerfield, for example, has demonstrated that school district communities are actually several communities rather than one--as many as there are neighborhood schools (1971). In each subcommunity, according to Summerfield, one can find a simple political model of what he calls "allocators" of and "petitioners" for available educational resources. While Summerfield does not address the problem of declining enrollment, the issue of scarce resources and the efforts of interest groups within a district to compete for them is at the heart of most school decline conflicts.

A recent study by Wood and Boyd (1981) looks specifically at the problem of neighborhoods and neighborhood schools as part of the declining enrollment picture. They note that the neighborhood concept has taken on a symbolic aura with "multiple and contradictory meanings" and one which "lends itself to political exploitation" (Wood & Boyd, 1981, p. 98). For example, they point to the fact that:

> A community can "discover" its neighborhoodness" as a consequence, not as a cause, of opposition, and this new identity can then become a powerful symbol of political interests (Wood & Boyd, 1981, p. 102).

Moreover, Wood and Boyd call attention to "administrative misreading" of public perceptions of neighborhoods and neighborhood schools (p. 112). It is in this regard that a community survey, and an attuned analysis of it, might serve to enlighten administrators who face a changing political environment due to declining enrollment.

In a school community crisis such as declining enrollment these political aspects may be at the heart of the problems associated with the decline: allocation and use of shrinking resources, long-range effects on educational program, and the impact of these decisions on the human elements of the community. As Katherine Eisenberger has pointed out in writing about the traumatic nature of school closings, there are no loyalties to a district--there is only loyalty to a school (Eisenberger, 1974, p. 33).

The importance of the neighborhood school concept in American communities goes beyond actual schooling. Many people actively seek homes in communities with a reputation for "good schools". Moreover, the neighborhood school is often valued as a hub of socialization as well as an educational institution. Those who have no children, or those who have already raised them, know the resale value of their home can be affected by the reputation and accessability of public schools. Although property taxes for schools may be excessive, the cost to homeowners of losing a neighborhood school may be higher in the long run. Parents and even nonparent taxpayers are therefore often resistant to closing a school in their own neighborhood (Keough, 1978, p. 9; Eisenberger, 1974, p. 34).

Another important indicator of what many Americans like to call "quality education" is class size, especially in the

lower grades (Porwell, 1978). Regardless of the controversy surrounding recent class size research studies (Glass & Smith, 1978; ERS, 1980, p. 70), the general public tends to believe that smaller classes mean better learning opportunities for students (Porwell, 1978). For residents--and especially parents--in a threatened area, small class size and neighborhood schools are what they stand to lose if schools are closed to cut costs. As declining enrollment literature and the practitioners point out, most residents see the closing of schools to save money as a sad but necessary step...unless it is the resident's own school--then it is suddenly unthinkable (Eisenberger, 1974, p. 34). Such a situation, in which citizens find themselves quarreling over priorities and scarce resources, has serious political implications.

Summerfield sees the political nature of school districts as a natural outgrowth of the neighborhood school concept (1971). In a declining enrollment situation, the threat of a school closing can be expected to heighten the political activity of residents in the threatened area. On the other hand, residents in school areas not threatened by closure may be more sensitive to rising costs of "unnecessary" underutilized facilities and the local tax levy that goes with them. These factors and the human special interests that attend them may be especially evident in a voluntary response to a school district's mail

survey. Don A. Dillman (1978), in his research on mail and telephone surveys, has pointed to the need for more attention to why respondents respond as they do. While it is widely acknowledged that mail questionnaire surveys yield notoriously low percentages of returns, Dillman suggests that further research on the nature of the respondents' reasons for participating (or for not participating) might illuminate the practical significance of the numbers that make up the return rate of individual survey situations (Dillman, 1978). This study addresses, in part, Dillman's concerns about survey respondent motivation.

Residents who identify their concern by simply responding to a community survey may provide the board with useful information about the political configurations of the community. If Robert Salisbury is right in supposing that people active in one area of community concern are likely to be active in another, then the people who take the time to respond to the survey are probably those who also take the time to exercise their right to vote on school matters (Salisbury, 1980, p. 100). The resident's right to vote on a school budget and to elect school board members is a source of power that residents in a threatened area would surely want to acknowledge to school officials (Summerfield, 1971). Moreover, PTA groups, consistently supportive of educational goals and school budgets, can be expected to put their political expertise into high gear if

threatened by the possibility of a school closing. Both PTA and neighborhood community leaders would, no doubt, see a community survey as an opportunity to encourage residents to "speak out" in an effort to influence the decision-making process of the board of education. It is the source of that "effort to influence" that this study is designed to examine.

A community mail survey may yield valuable information for school districts facing declining enrollment, but unless school officials examine the source of the survey responses, they may be looking at a distorted picture of community concerns. Once the various school attendance areas have been identified, there may be good reason to view them as special interest groups in their own right.

Essentially, then, school officials need to know whether their communities are of one mind or many. Do several communities exist within the district, as Summerfield has suggested, and if so, are these differences related to the threat of a neighborhood school closing? Specifically, in light of Summerfield's theory on neighborhood-based politics, the following questions can be raised regarding responses to community surveys in times of declining enrollment:

-Will school attendance areas differ on educational priorities in a time of declining enrollment?

-Will a higher percentage of residents whose neighborhood schools are threatened by declining enrollment

respond to an opportunity to make their views known to the board of education?

-Will such residents see public schools in a more positive light than residents who do not feel threatened by the closing of their neighborhood school?

-Will such residents give higher priority to small classes and neighborhood schools than other residents?

-Are such residents likely to indicate that they are more active in voting on the school budget than other residents?

This study tests six hypotheses about differences in elementary attendance areas in one suburban school district during a period of declining enrollment and rising taxes. Specifically, the study examines the survey responses of residents threatened by a school closing as compared with the responses of those whose schools are not threatened.

1. A larger percentage of residents in a threatened elementary school attendance area will respond to the survey than those in nonthreatened areas. Harry Summerfield has explored the political nature of school neighborhoods and their ability to mobilize for defense when necessary, particularly when there is past evidence of organized leadership and commitment to the neighborhood concept of

education. Based on the work of Summerfield and others cited in the literature, and in view of the threatened area's demonstration of political action ability in the last school budget vote (In 1981, 726 votes were cast by Wimberly Park residents out of the 1353 total number of votes cast), it is reasonable to expect that Wimberly Park residents will respond in proportionally larger numbers than the nonthreatened area residents of Marjorie Street and North End.

2. Compared with respondents in nonthreatened areas, respondents in a threatened area will indicate that the quality of the public schools is a more important factor in their decision to live in the community. Real estate agents are often the first to verify the role the public schcols play in people's decisions to buy in a community. For many, "quality schools" include neighborhood school access (Eisenberger, 1974). Moreover, people who may stand a chance of losing a neighborhood school are likely to be more sensitive to that loss as a "loss of quality".
3. Compared with responses in nonthreatened areas, respondents in the threatened area will indicate that the quality of the public schools has a more important effect on the property value of homes in their areas. The literature has pointed out that the neighborhood school concept is an economic one as well as an educational one. People who

have invested in a home because of the community's neighborhood schools can be expected to equate "quality" schools with that neighborhood concept and, therefore, will indicate that the quality of the schools enhances the property value of homes in their area.

4. Compared with responses in nonthreatened areas, respondents in a threatened area will indicate class size as a higher priority in assessing the strengths of the school system. Schools with declining enrollment enjoy the luxury (albeit the expense) of space and small class size, in most cases. In spite of rising taxes, many residents--and especially parents--in the threatened area will want to maintain the "higher quality" often equated with small class size and give it priority as a strength of the school system.
5. Compared with responses in nonthreatened areas, respondents in the threatened area will indicate neighborhood schools as a higher priority in assessing the strengths of the school system. As indicated in the literature on neighborhood-based politics, for residents--and especially parents--in a threatened area, this opportunity to indicate support for the neighborhood school concept to the board of education can be expected to draw a high response from those who fear the loss of their own school.

6. Compared with responses in nonthreatened areas, respondents in the threatened area will indicate that they are more active in voting on the school budget. Politically astute and active residents can be expected to respond to the questionnaire. In this case, the threatened area of Wimberly Park has already shown its "voting power" in the last school budget contest. According to Robert Salisbury's recent study on citizen participation (1980), those who have been active in one area of school participation will also be involved in this survey.

Design and Methodology

This study examines the relationship between one independent variable--where a school resident lives in the district (the legally defined "school attendance area")--and one dependent variable--the resident's responses to a mailed questionnaire regarding the community's public schools in a period of declining enrollment.

The elementary school attendance area is, according to Harry Summerfield, a legally bounded area for public school attendance by children of the "neighborhood" of families clustering around the elementary school (1971). In this study of the Lorton school district, these elementary school attendance areas consist of Marjorie Street School (2611 households), Wimberly Park School (917 households), and North End School (2947 households).

The term "threatened school attendance area" refers to the school-closing possibility in the area, due to declining enrollment. The school in this district in danger of being closed as a result of declining enrollment is that of Wimberly Park with a current enrollment of 250 students as compared with Marjorie Street's 395 students and North End's 417 students.

The dependent variable in this study consists of resident responses to a mail survey questionnaire. The responses to six questions are examined. Two of the questions elicit information about the resident: school attendance area and degree of school budget voting activity. Two other questions ask the resident's opinion about the "quality" of the schools in relation to real estate property value in the area and the resident's decision to live in the area. The two remaining questions ask about class size and neighborhood schools as priority areas of strength in the school system. These six response areas are analyzed to test the hypotheses of the study.

Sample

Since one purpose of the survey was to reach each resident household of the district, the sample actually designed was a census, or 100% sample (Federer, 1973, p. 63). The sampling frame for the mailed questionnaire was the school district resident mailing list based on the house-to-house census of

the school district. The current resident/household count of the Lorton School District is 6475, which includes each of the three elementary school attendance areas. This list consists of household addresses rather than names, and it lists all apartment households as separate addresses. The list was checked against other sources of school district population figures, i.e., The Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) school attendance services, Department of Assessment in the County Seat, and the district's own file of school census records.

The sampling unit for the survey was the resident household; the observational unit for the survey was the person representing the household in answering the questionnaire (Federer, 1973, p. 67). A ten-day return period was eventually extended to one month in order to encourage a greater response rate (Tufte, 1977, p. 122). A random selection of 329 residents from the BOCES school census list for Lorton was telephoned to check nonresponse bias.

Materials

The questionnaire for the survey was developed in the following manner. After a search of the literature revealed no survey questionnaire model that would be appropriate for the purposes of the school district, a series of questions patterned after those used in various Gallop polls of the public's attitudes toward schools (Smith & Gallop, 1977) and

the Seattle Neighborhood Survey (ED 133 914, 1976) were constructed by the researcher in conjunction with survey consultants at Hofstra University. The questions were reviewed by the school district officials and prepared for mailing by the district's printing service.

Data Collection Procedure

The mail survey questionnaire was mailed to each resident household on the school district mailing list by third class (bulk) mail. According to school officials, this type of mail delivery in Lorton usually requires no more than three or four days for home delivery. A cover letter (page one of a three-part, fold-out design) by the superintendent explained the purpose of the survey, urged the resident's cooperation, and requested that the questionnaire be returned within ten days. As indicated earlier, this deadline was later extended to encourage greater response.

The returned questionnaires were collected, dated and stored in the superintendent's office until the date of the first deadline. The returns were then picked up by the researcher for coding and analysis. The superintendent's office continued to collect all returns which were picked up weekly by the researcher.

The responses on the returns were coded and transposed to computer coding sheets for IBM card punching. Cards were punched by the university computer center service, and an SPSS program was written for the processing of the data.

Since the hypotheses of the study are based on household responses by district school attendance area, frequency distributions were derived from the responses to question # 13 on the questionnaire in which respondents were asked to identify the elementary school which children in their neighborhood attend. Wimberly Park (threatened area) respondents were designated as one group; all other respondents (nonthreatened areas) were designated as a second group. These frequency totals are displayed in Table 1 in which the sample frequencies are compared with the population frequencies of the resident households of threatened and nonthreatened school attendance areas.

Hypothesis 1 looked at the proportion of threatened and nonthreatened respondents who responded to the survey. A two-tailed *z* was used to test the significance of the difference between the two proportions. A significant *z* indicates that the difference between the proportion of South Area respondents and the proportion of respondents from the two other school attendance areas is greater than would be expected from chance variation if the two groups were equivalent.

Hypothesis 2 examined the responses of threatened and nonthreatened households on the importance of the quality of the public schools as a factor in their decision to live in the community. A two-tailed *t* was used to test the significance of the difference between the responses of the two groups.

A significant *t* indicates that Wimberly Park respondents rated the quality of the schools as significantly more important than did those of the other two school attendance areas. The responses to this question (#6) on the survey are indicated in Table 2.

Hypothesis 3 focused on the threatened and nonthreatened responses to the question of the quality of the public schools as an enhancement of the property value of homes in their areas. A chi square was used to test the significance of the difference between the frequencies of the two groups' responses. A significant chi square would indicate that the difference between the frequencies of the Wimberly Park respondents and those of the two other school attendance areas is greater than would be expected from chance variation if the two groups were equivalent. These frequencies, which are responses to question #8 on the survey, are displayed in Table 3.

Threatened and nonthreatened responses to class size as a priority strength of the school system is the focus of hypothesis 4. A chi square was used to test the significance of the difference between the response frequencies of the two groups. A significant chi square indicates that the difference between the frequencies of the Wimberly Park respondents and those of the two other school attendance areas is greater than would be expected from chance variation if the two groups were equivalent. The frequencies for the two groups in response to this question (#9) are displayed in Table 4.

The responses of the threatened and nonthreatened school attendance areas regarding neighborhood schools as a priority strength of the school system is examined in hypothesis 5. A chi square was used to test the significance of the difference between the response frequencies of the two groups. A significant chi square indicates that the difference between the frequencies of Wimberly Park respondents and those of the two other school attendance areas is greater than would be expected from chance variation if the two groups were equivalent. The frequencies in response to neighborhood schools as a priority strength are displayed in Table 5.

Hypothesis 6 focused on the residents' activity as voters on the school budget. A two-tailed *t* was used to test the difference between the mean scores on responses of the Wimberly Park respondents and those of the two other school attendance area respondents. A significant *t* indicates that the difference between the mean scores of the two groups is greater than would be expected from chance variation if the two groups were equivalent. The mean scores for the responses to this question (#12) on the survey are displayed in Table 6.

Results

Of the questionnaires mailed to the school district population of 6475 resident households, a total of 911 were returned and analyzed for data used in testing the six hypotheses regarding differences in the responses of threatened area residents (Wimberly Park) and the responses of nonthreatened areas (all other areas).

The data displayed in Table 1 were used to test hypothesis 1 which states: A larger percentage of residents in a threatened elementary school attendance area will respond to the survey than those in nonthreatened areas. These data show that of the 911 returned questionnaires, 212 respondents reported Wimberly Park as a school attendance residence as compared with the total Wimberly Park residence household population of 917, resulting in a 23 percent return. The respondents reporting residence in school attendance areas other than Wimberly Park numbered 699 out of a total population of 5,558, or a 13 percent return. A two-tailed z test for significance of difference between two independent proportions (Ferguson, 1971, p. 161) yielded a z of 8.43. Since the critical value of z at .05 level of alpha is 1.96, the difference is significant between the two proportions. The results confirm hypothesis 1 and allow us to conclude that a significantly greater proportion of Wimberly Park households responded to the survey than those in the nonthreatened areas.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 2 presents data for hypothesis 2: Compared with respondents in nonthreatened areas, respondents in the threatened area will indicate that the quality of the public schools is a more important factor in their decision to live in the community.

A mean score of 2.73 for Wimberly Park responses to question #6 on the survey is compared with a mean score of 2.51 for responses of other than Wimberly Park residents. A two-tailed t test of the difference between the two means (pooled variances) resulted in a t of 3.91. Since the critical value of t at .05 level of alpha is 1.96, the difference is significant between the two means, allowing us to confirm hypothesis 2 and to conclude that Wimberly Park responses indicate the quality of the public schools as a significantly more important factor in their decision to live in the community than the responses of the two other school attendance area households.

Insert Table 2 about here

The data displayed in Table 3 were used to test hypothesis 3 which states: Compared with responses in nonthreatened areas, respondents in the threatened area will indicate that the quality of the public schools has a more important effect on the property value of homes in their areas. Wimberly Park respondents indicated in 145 responses that the quality of schools had a great deal of importance with regard to local property values while 60 Wimberly Park responses indicated not so great an importance. This compares with 435 responses from other-than-Wimberly Park respondents who indicated quality of public schools has a great deal of importance regarding local property values in contrast with 234 non-Wimberly Park households

for .05 level at 1 degree of freedom, we reject hypothesis 4 and conclude that, in comparison with other school attendance area responses, Wimberly Park respondents do not assign a higher priority to class size as a strength of the school system than other residents who responded.

Insert Table 4 about here

The data displayed in Table 5 were used to test hypothesis 5: Compared with responses in nonthreatened areas, respondents in the threatened area will indicate neighborhood schools as a higher priority in assessing the strengths of the school system. In assigning priorities to items in question #9 of the survey, Table 5 shows that 132 Wimberly Park responses gave no high priority to neighborhood schools as a strength while 80 gave it a high priority. Respondents other than Wimberly Park assigned no high priority to neighborhood schools in 483 responses while 216 gave it a high priority as a strength of the school system. A chi square test of the significance of the difference in these frequencies resulted in $X^2 = 3.15$ with 1 degree of freedom at .05 level of alpha. Since 3.15 is less than the chi square critical value for .05 level at 1 degree of freedom, we reject hypothesis 5 and conclude that, in comparison with other school attendance area

responses, Wimberly Park respondents do not assign a higher priority to neighborhood schools as a strength of the school system than other residents who responded.

Insert Table 5 about here

Table 6 displays data used to test hypothesis 6: Compared with responses in nonthreatened areas, respondents in the threatened area will indicate that they are more active in voting on the school budget. The data in Table 6 show the frequencies of responses to the four answers (assigned scores of 1, 2, 3 and 4) and the mean scores for both Wimberly Park respondents (3.35) and for respondents other than Wimberly Park (2.97). A two-tailed *t* test of the difference between the two means (pooled variances) resulted in a *t* of 4.46. Since the critical *t* value at .05 level is 1.96, the difference between the two means is significant, allowing us to confirm hypothesis 6 and to conclude that Wimberly Park respondents indicate that they are more active in voting on the school budget than other school attendance area households who responded to the survey.

Insert Table 6 about here

Discussion

The results of this study confirm the major question guiding the research--neighborhood communities are different in ways that should be of interest to school boards and school officials, particularly in times of declining enrollment.

The significance of the first hypothesis, in showing that Wimberly Park residents are "over-represented" in the survey, was foreshadowed in the May 1981 budget vote of the school district, thus confirming Robert Salisbury's (1980) reference to the theory that those who participate in one phase of school involvement are likely to participate in others.

The fact that Wimberly Park residents differ significantly from the other attendance areas in the extent to which they hold quality of the schools to be a factor in their decision to live in Lorton reflects the subcommunity's belief in education as a primary community resource. The number of Wimberly Park responses to the survey as compared with its population figures lead to an intriguing political observation: While Wimberly Park holds the power of the education system in Lorton through its active, political involvement, it may be close to its maximum in citizen participation. Should economic issues worsen, less active or now noninvolved citizens who have played a passive role thus far may exercise their right to participation and a voice in the educational priorities of the community subgroups.

What is evident from the results of the other hypotheses is that for those citizens who currently participate, the differences are relatively slight. Further research on other variables that may influence community differences or levels of interest is needed. Factors such as resident parents and resident taxpayers (homeowners) may be of considerable importance as independent variables in the question of how different or alike neighborhood communities really are.

Moreover, some procedures and constraints in this study which may affect the confidence of the results reported in this paper should be acknowledged. For example, some question exists as to whether all questionnaires reached the residences by mail delivery. Although additional forms were made available to those who requested them and the time extended to accommodate their completion, the procedure seriously muddies the sampling frame waters.

In addition, the timeline of the school officials sometimes preempted the original plans of the researcher. In particular, the plan for pretesting the instrument had to be dropped and the telephone nonresponse bias survey had to suffice.

Overall, the study seems to suggest, however, that a school community mail survey--with proper planning and a realistic timeline--can provide school districts with valuable insights into the dynamics of their citizenry. Those insights, in light of the ubiquitous dilemma of rising taxes and declining enrollment, may be the key for school officials in attempting to successfully manage the politics of decline in their districts.

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Table 1

Frequency Data:

Household Responses by School Attendance Area

School Attendance Areas	Frequency Totals		
	Sample	Population	% Returned
Wimberly Park	212	917	23%*
Others	699	5558	13%

*$\underline{z}$ = 8.43, $\underline{p} < .05$.

Table 2

Effect of Quality of Schools on Living in Community

by Sample Frequency Totals

School Attendance Areas (Score)	Survey Responses Not Important (1)	Important (2)	Very Important (3)	Mean
Wimberly Park	11	35	164	2.73*
Others	90	156	434	2.51

*$\underline{t}$ = 3.91, $p < .05$.

Table 3

Effect of Quality of Schools on Local Property Values

by Sample Frequency Totals

School Attendance Areas	Survey Responses	
	Not a great deal	A great deal
Wimberly Park	60	145
Others	234	435

Table 4

Class Size as a Priority Strength of the School System by Sample Frequency Totals

School Attendance Areas	Survey Responses	
	No	Yes
Wimberly Park	124	88
Others	461	238

Table 5

Neighborhoods as a Priority Strength of the School System by Sample Frequency Totals

School Attendance Areas	Survey Responses	
	No	Yes
Wimberly Park	132	80
Others	483	216

Table 6

Resident's Self-assessment of Voting on School Budget by Sample Frequency Totals

School Attendance Areas (Score)	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Usually (3)	Always (4)	Mean
Wimberly Park	12	26	50	123	3.35*
Others	101	118	145	303	2.97

*$\underline{t}$ = 4.46, $\underline{p} < .05$.